FIRST COMICS
APR. $1.00
NO. 2
$1.25 CANADA
WARP
IT'S CUMULUS VS. CHAOS!
MY BATTLEFIELD...
MY BODY!
BRUNNER

FIRST™ NOTES

It might be Christmastime where you are, but here in the offices of **First Comics**, it is 82° and early October, and I've got lots of things to talk about this month.It's hard to fake the holiday spirit. . .

FIRST COMICS DEBUTS TO UNPRECEDENTED RAVES!

Don't you just hate that type of mindless hype? I mean most of our readers are sophisticated enough to know there is no possible way for us to have any meaningful feedback on last month's issue: **Warp #1** went on sale in mid-November, and I'm writing this column at the beginning of October.

But I will say this: we have had a great deal of positive comments; our early orders on **Warp #1** look like the book will exceed our expectations by some distance, and our subscription orders are quite formidable. In fact, we've been sailing along so smoothly the past several months that we almost were afraid to publish **Warp #1** in fear of putting an end to all that good energy. But after taking a look at our first issue – and the work thus far on this month's books and next – we realized we were being more than a bit paranoid.

As for unprecedented raves, last month's **First Comics** release did exceed all sales on all previous **First Comics** releases.

WEIRD FEELINGS

Sounds like the name of an underground romance book, right?

Last month, Joe, Bruce and I just happened to be at a party largely attended by underground comics people (the party just happened to be at Joe's place) – including Denis Kitchen, Jay Lynch, Steve Stiles, Jay Kinney, Skip Williamson and Gary Whitney. At one point, Joe and I looked at the gathered crowd and wondered if this wouldn't be the time to think seriously about doing some sort of humor-oriented title, with an impact on the 1980s similar to the impact *Mad* had on the 1950s or *National Lampoon* had on the 1970s. A likely observation, considering all the fantastic talent gathered in the room at the time.

The weird thing was, all this fantastic talent – creators of much of the finest satirical stuff in comics over the past fifteen years – were talking about something completely different: they were wondering if this wasn't the time to re-create the fantastic EC horror comics of the 1950s! Different strokes for different folks.

But I will give a plug to some folks who really deserve it. The underground comics, as we know 'em, are not dead, they've only become harder to find. There's still a lot of fantastic stuff out there, and if you are of an "adult" age, you certainly can get the latest undergrounds via mail. The very same store that sells you **First Comics** probably carries *The Spirit* from Kitchen Sink – one of the leading publishers of underground comics – and that magazine cleverly carries mail-order ads for the undergrounds published by Kitchen, as well as those published by most of the other guys. There are other mail-order distributors of undergrounds as well – Bud Plant comes to mind most readily – and they advertise in **The Buyer's Guide** and other comics fan publications.

End of plug. I'll take that free ad now, Denis.

MANDO'S THE NAME. . .

As of this writing, one of the things that separates the new publishers from the old is that most of our comics – and *all* of **First's** – are published on something called 37 lb. Mando stock, which is about 15% thicker and a whole lot whiter than the stuff you are used to seeing comics printed on. Yep, it's more expensive.

We're printing on Mando for two reasons:

1) It looks better. Colors are more vibrant, without being downright glaring. Solid blacks look better.

2) On 37 lb. stock, you are less likely to be able to read two pages at the same time – the right-hand page forwards, and the following left-hand page backwards, bleeding through the aforementioned right-hand page, and vice versa.

INSIDE OUT

Office Meanderings: **Joe Staton's** artwork graces the long-awaited G.I. Joe game from International Games. . . Writer **John Ostrander** currently is in the process of performing in Christmas Carol at Chicago's Goodman Theatre, for the fourth year running. Scrooge is played by William J. Norris, who was the original Symax in the *Warp* stage-plays. . . If you zot on out to your friendly neighborhood bookstore and take even a passing glance at the science-fiction racks, you'll see about a dozen **Howard Chaykin** covers, mostly from Tor Books, mostly wraparounds, and mostly fantastic. Chaykin's initial gracing of the **First Comics'** pages will occur this March. . . **Mike Grell** and his hard-working wife Sharon (hey, you try and live with Mike sometime) just completed their move from the wilds of Northern Wisconsin to the wilds of Idaho. Well, at least the weather's better, Mike.

NEXT MONTH

The **Warp** saga continues (Cumulus goes to hell?), **E-Man** meets the F-Men, and we start dating our checks "1983." Damn; I just stopped dating mine "1981."

– Mike Gold,
Editor

ALSO FIRST IN DECEMBER:

E-MAN #1: "E.M., PHONE HOME," wherein Martin Pasko and Joe Staton pay back Steven Spielberg for years of entertainment. The whole E-Man gang is back: Alec Tronn, Nova Kane, Michael Mauser. Everything you've ever loved about the original comic book is here, plus a whole lot more! Plus, a special and unique one-page story, written and drawn by a special and unique comics pro. The only trouble is, we're not supposed to tell you either the name of the story or the name of the guy who did it! **E-Man #1** is on sale right now!

Rick Obadiah, Publisher

Mike Gold, Managing Editor
Joe Staton, Art Director
Rick Oliver, Associate Editor
Bruce Patterson, Production Coordinator

Richard Felber, Business Manager
Kathy Kotsivas, Office Manager

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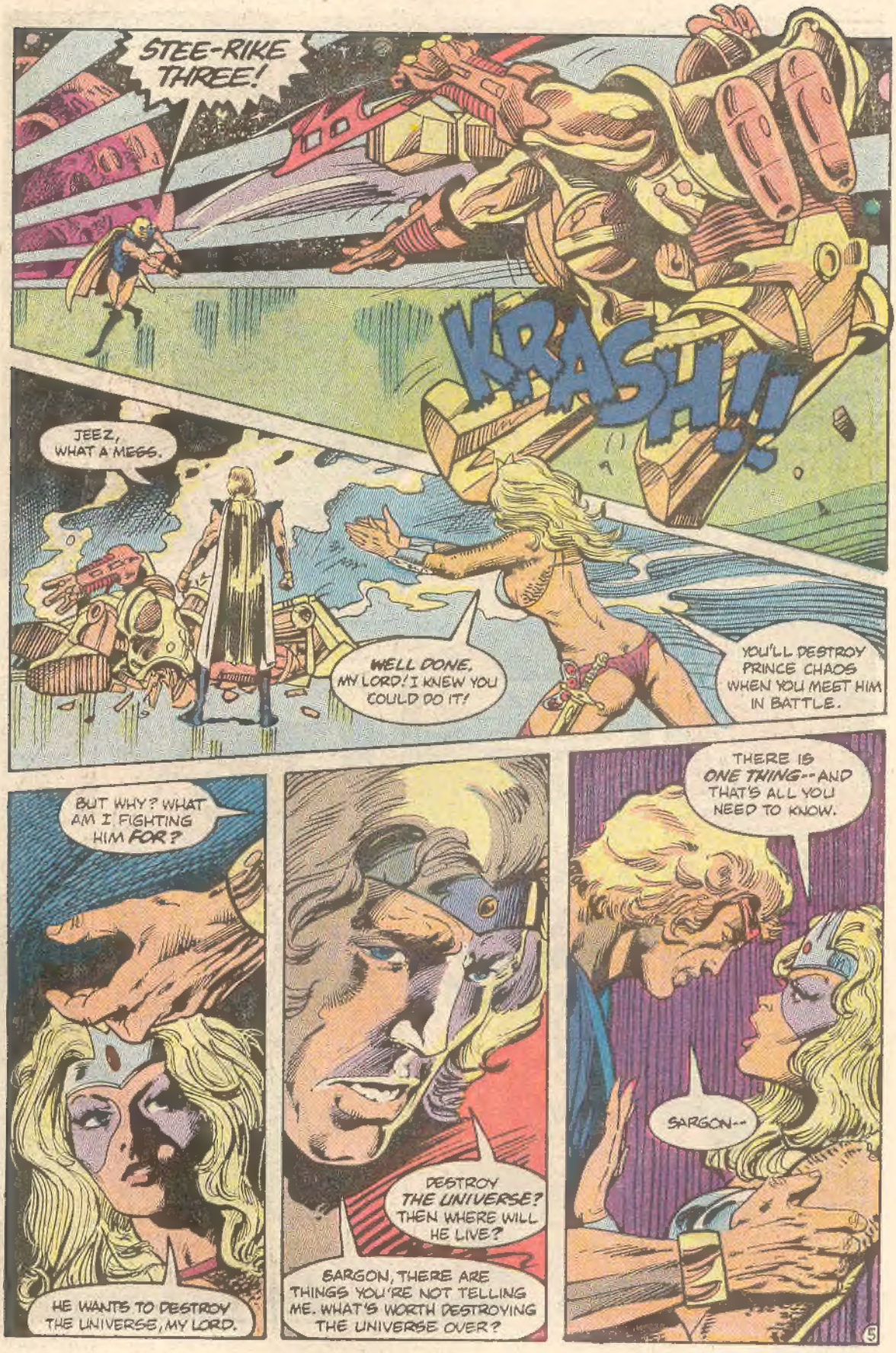
A FIRST COMICS PUBLISHING PRODUCTION

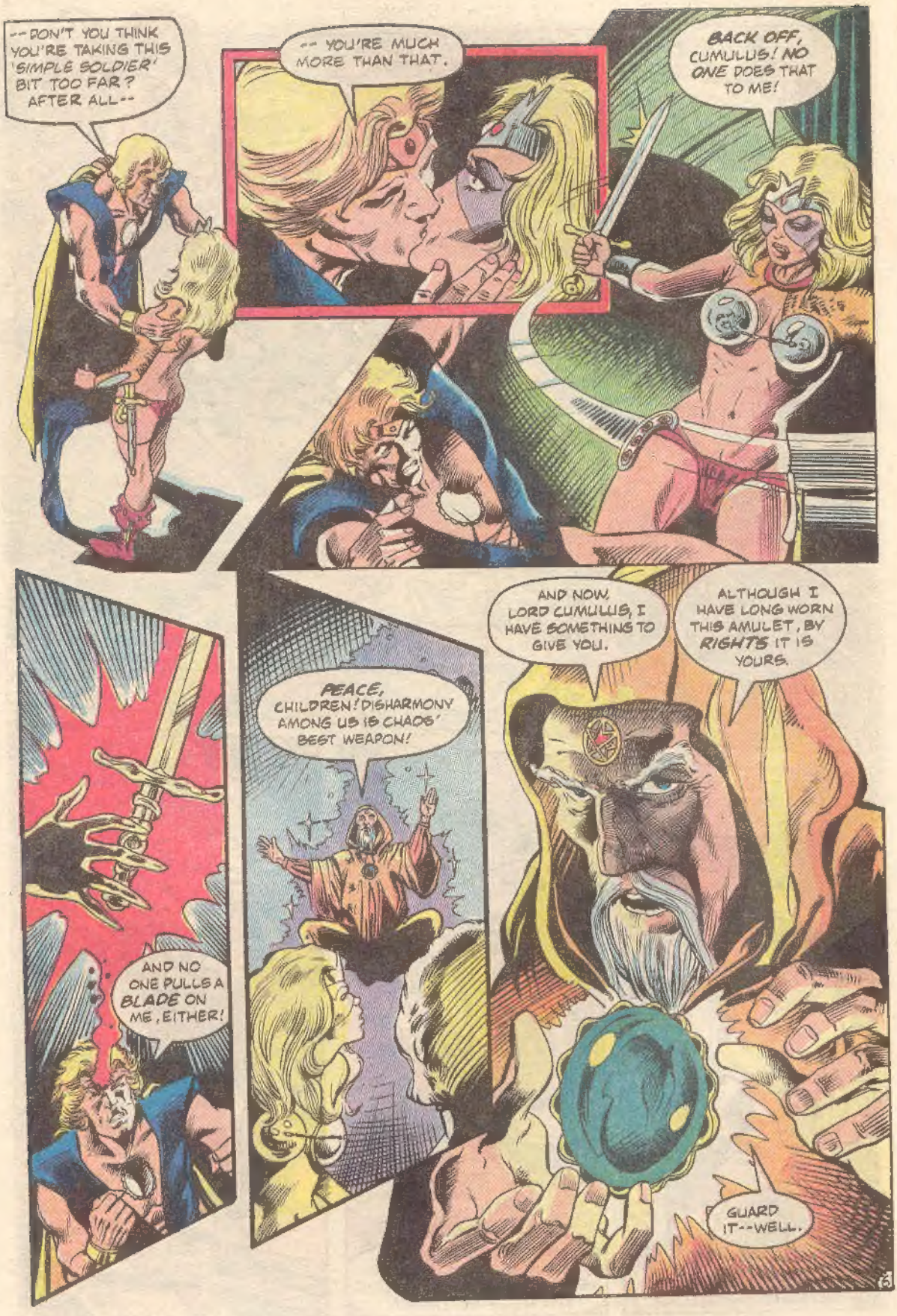
OK, UGULBANDA, I'M READY FOR THIS FINAL TEST OF YOURS.
"SUCH ARE THE WORDS OF LORD CUMULUS, OUR CHAMPION, OUR LAST BEST HOPE AGAINST THE POWER OF PRINCE CHAOS."
"YET HE HAS ONLY JUST BEEN BROUGHT ACROSS THE GULFS FROM DISTANT EARTH AND BEEN APPRISED OF HIS HERITAGE."
"SARGON, MISTRESS OF WAR HAS TRAINED HIM, AND SHE IS EAGER, CONFIDENT."
"BUT CUMULUS IS STILL AS A CHILD: CAPRICIOUS AND IGNORANT. FOR FENRA'S SAKE, AND THE SAKE OF ALL THAT IS, HE MUST BE FOUND EQUAL TO THE CHALLENGE BEFORE HIM."
SO LET'S GET THIS SHOW ON-- UNNNH!
WHAK!
"HE HAS MUCH TO LEARN --AND TO ENDURE."

CHAPTER 2 OF --
WARP
MY BATTLEFIELD, MY BODY!
YOUR EXAMINER IS ONE OF MY FACELESS ONES--THOUGH MODIFIED CONSIDERABLY, I WARN YOU!
HE IS MY LATEST CREATION--THE SAMUROID. THE TERMS OF YOUR TEST ARE TRIUMPH--OR DEATH, MY LORD!
FRANK BRUNNER ARTIST/STORYTELLER
PETER GILLIS SCRIPTER
BOB SMITH INKER
PATTERSON LETTERER
JANICE COHEN COLORIST
MIKE GOLD EDITOR
BASED ON THE PLAYS BY STUART GORDON AND BURY ST. EDMUND.

WELL, I GUESS THEY HAVE TO BE CALLED SOMETHING.
WHA--! IT CAN LEVITATE!
BUT THAT TRICK WON'T WORK TWICE-- HEY!
JUST SO, LORD. WHICH IS WHY THE FOG OF WAR SURROUNDS YOU.
WELL, MY NEW POWERS SHOULD BE ABLE TO LOCATE YOU MENTALLY.
TOO SLOWLY, LORD.
YOU DIE NOW.
LIKE HELL I WILL, ROBOT!
TRY FIGHTING WITHOUT YOUR ENERGY STAFF!
CRAP! IT'S GOT A BUILT-IN BLASTER!

THEN AGAIN, SO DO I! LET'S SEE IF YOU CAN TAKE IT!
ZZIK!
DAMN! I'M OFF-CENTER!
SO NOW YOU BRING IN THE REINFORCEMENTS, EH?
AND WHOEVER I ATTACK, THE OTHER GETS ME. NEAT.
YES, THINGS LOOK PRETTY BLACK FOR OUR HERO--
--BUT HERE'S A TRICK A LITTLE OLD LADY NAMED SARSON TAUGHT ME!
THE RIGHT TRAJECTORY, AND--


STEE-RIKE THREE!
KRASH!!!
JEEZ, WHAT A MESS.
WELL DONE, MY LORD! I KNEW YOU COULD DO IT!
YOU'LL DESTROY PRINCE CHAOS WHEN YOU MEET HIM IN BATTLE.
BUT WHY? WHAT AM I FIGHTING HIM FOR?
HE WANTS TO DESTROY THE UNIVERSE, MY LORD.
DESTROY THE UNIVERSE? THEN WHERE WILL HE LIVE?
SARGON, THERE ARE THINGS YOU'RE NOT TELLING ME. WHAT'S WORTH DESTROYING THE UNIVERSE OVER?
THERE IS ONE THING--AND THAT'S ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW.
SARGON--
5

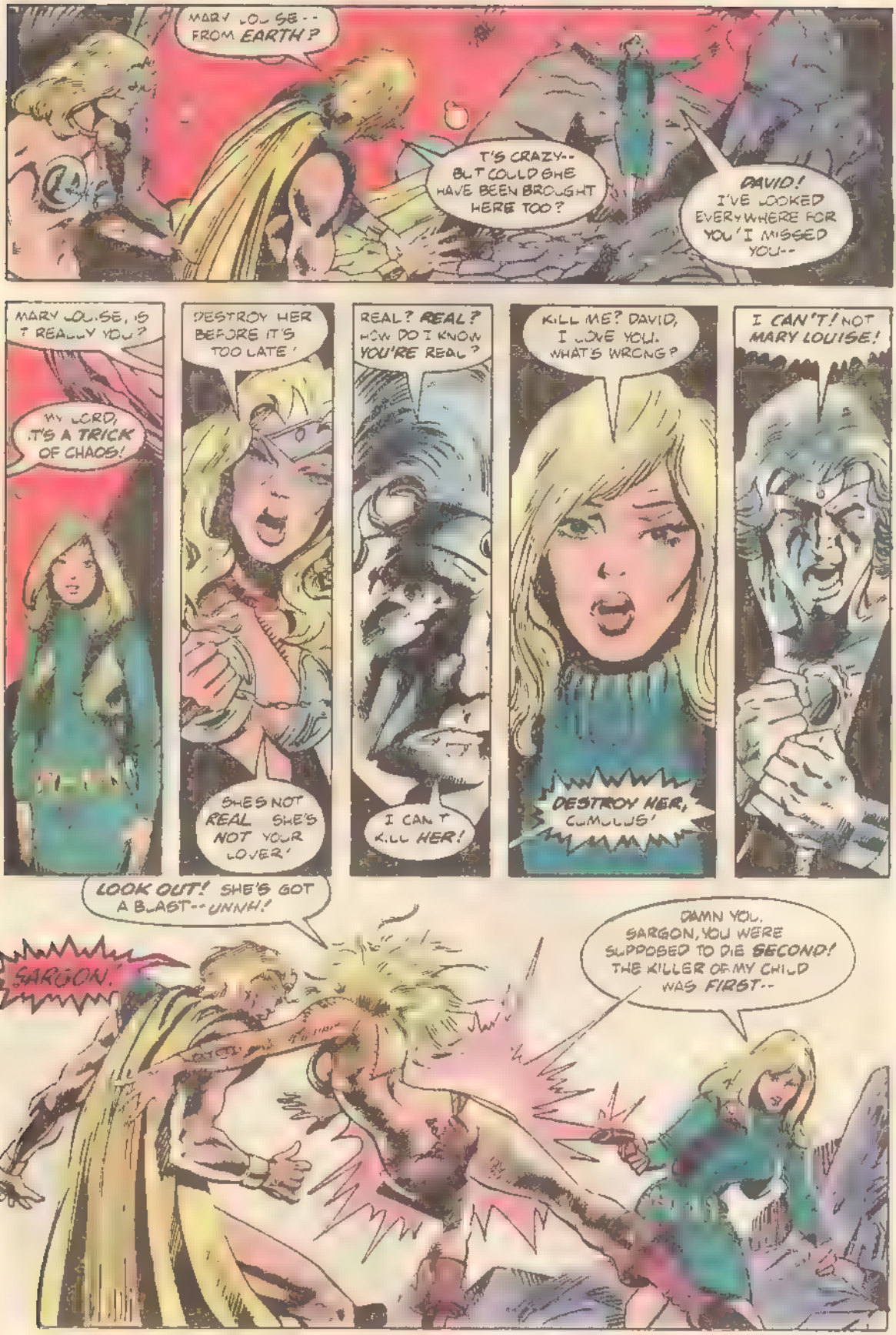

--DON'T YOU THINK YOU'RE TAKING THIS 'SIMPLE SOLDIER' BIT TOO FAR? AFTER ALL--
-- YOU'RE MUCH MORE THAN THAT.
BACK OFF, CUMULUS! NO ONE DOES THAT TO ME!
AND NO ONE PULLS A BLADE ON ME, EITHER!
PEACE, CHILDREN! DISHARMONY AMONG US IS CHAOS' BEST WEAPON!
AND NOW, LORD CUMULUS, I HAVE SOMETHING TO GIVE YOU.
ALTHOUGH I HAVE LONG WORN THIS AMULET, BY RIGHTS IT IS YOURS.
GUARD IT--WELL.

SHORTLY THEREAFTER--
THESE WHATCHAMACALLEMS ARE FAST, SARGON! HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE US FROM PEN-RA TO--WHEREVER IT IS WE'RE GOING?
THEY'RE CALLED ZONES OF FLIGHT, LORD CUMULUS--AND I'M AFRAID THE LENGTH OF OUR JOURNEY IS INEXPRESSIBLE IN ORDINARY TERMS.
PERHAPS I CAN EXPLAIN--YOU KNOW WHAT A VECTOR SPACE IS?
A WHAT??
FORGET IT AND FOLLOW ME CLOSELY.
WHILE, FARTHER ALONG THE WAY TO THE REALMS OF PRINCE CHAOS--
YES, MY LOVELY YGGTHION, VALARIA IS HERE AND SHE'S PROUD OF YOU. REACH OUT TO CUMULUS--ENTICE HIM AS HE PASSES--BUT SUBTLY, SO SARGON STAYS UNAWARE--
--AND BE GENEROUS WITH YOUR FRUIT, FOR THE SAKE OF SHE WHO GAVE YOU BIRTH!
WE'VE REACHED THE BORDERS OF CHAOS'S REALM. FROM HERE ON WE GO ON FOOT: CHAOS MAY NOT EXPECT SUCH A MOVE.

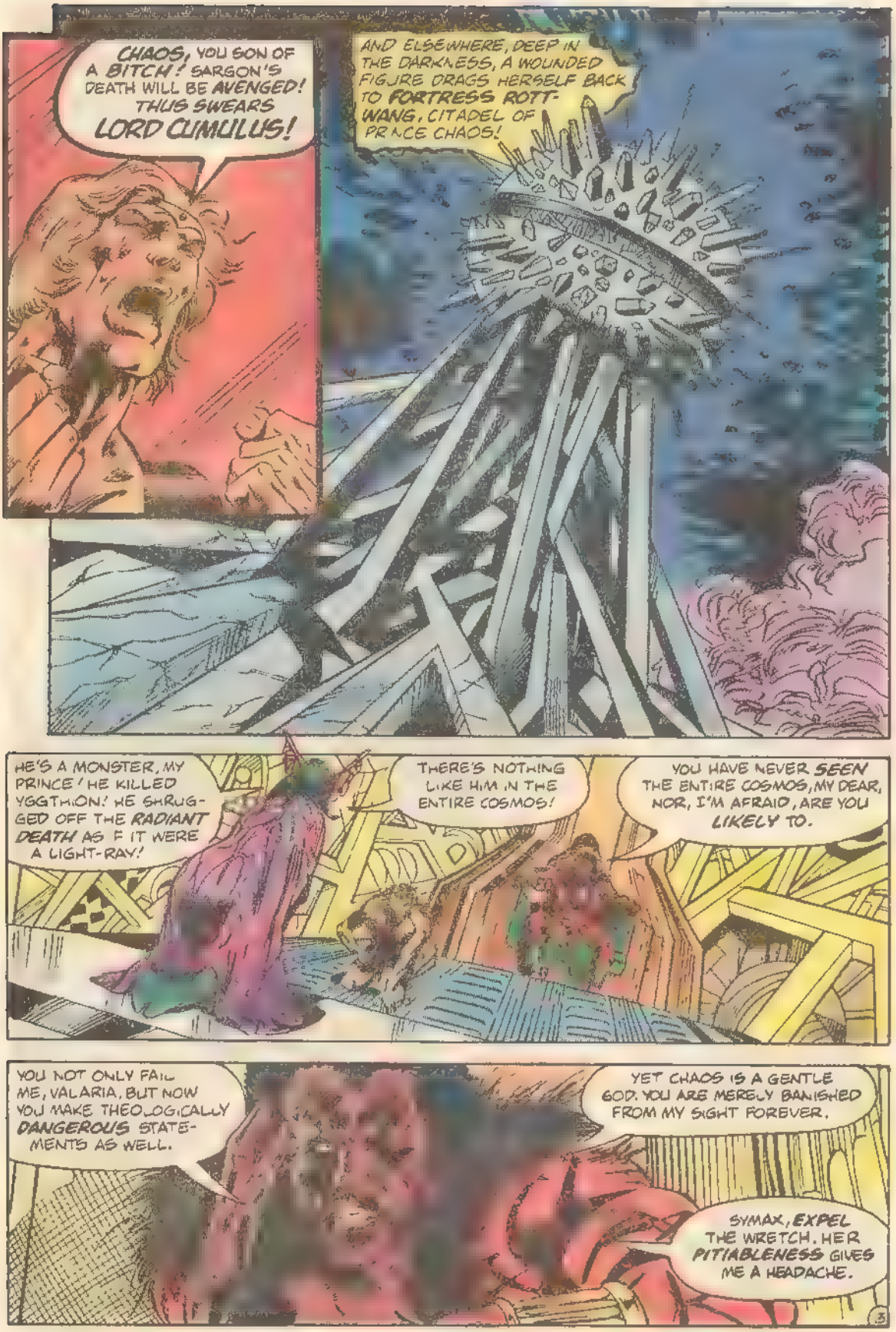
HEY, I HAVEN'T EATEN IN AGES! I'VE NEVER HAD SPACE FRUIT BEFORE--!
THIS STUFF ISN'T BAD! HEY, SARGON, WANT A BITE?
BITE? BITE??
HUNH??
CUMULUS, YOU AGS! WE DON'T HAVE ANTITOXINS TO DEAL WITH THE FRUIT'S POISON!
P-POISON?
SARGON, YOU'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING!
NO, MY LORD! ONLY YOU CAN! TURN YOUR MIND FORCES INWARDS! COUNTER ITS VEGIFYING INFLUENCE!
SARGON! MY HAND--!

SSSARGHON..
HOLD ON, MY LORD! I'VE GOT TO BEND--TIME VECTORS--
BACK--BACK ON THEMSELVES-- REVERSE TIME FLOW--
"UNTIL WE REACH THE CRITICAL POINT--I SEE IT--"
"AND THEN RELEASE!"
DON'T TOUCH IT, CUMULUS!
SARGON! WHAT THE HELL--?
YOU KNIFE-HAPPY LITTLE--! YOU COULD HAVE HIT ME!
DON'T ARGUE, CUMULUS! DESTROY THAT TREE-- NOW!
OK, OK! BUT WE'VE GOT TO TALK, SARGON--!
AND THE TREE SCREAMS--!

SARGON! WHAT'S WRONG? WHAT'S GOING ON?
TREE-- POISONED YOU-- YOU WERE DYING-- TURNED BACK TIME TO SAVE YOU--
LOOK, I WAS STUPID AND I'M SORRY. DON'T HUMOR ME BY MAKING IT THE TREE'S FAULT.
YOU MEAN SHE-- DID IT WITH A TREE?
BUT IT WAS NO ORDINARY TREE, MY LORD. THAT WAS YGGTHION, SON OF VALARIA'S LOINS.
WAIT A SECOND-- IF YOU CAN TURN BACK TIME, WHY CAN'T WE JUST GO BACK TO CHAOS'S BIRTH AND KILL HIM THEN?
THAT'S FARTHER BACK THAN YOU IMAGINE, MY LORD--
BUT ANYTHING MORE THAN WHAT I JUST DID PUTS A FATAL STRAIN--ON--
IF YOU CAN'T GO ON, SARGON, I'LL TAKE YOU BACK TO FEN-RA AND FINISH THIS MYSELF.
DAVID!
THAT VOICE--!


MARY LOUISE--FROM EARTH?
IT'S CRAZY--BUT COULD SHE HAVE BEEN BROUGHT HERE TOO?
DAVID! I'VE LOOKED EVERYWHERE FOR YOU! I MISSED YOU--
MARY LOUISE, IS IT REALLY YOU?
MY LORD, IT'S A TRICK OF CHAOS!
DESTROY HER BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!
SHE'S NOT REAL SHE'S NOT YOUR LOVER!
REAL? REAL? HOW DO I KNOW YOU'RE REAL?
I CAN'T KILL HER!
KILL ME? DAVID, I LOVE YOU. WHAT'S WRONG?
DESTROY HER, CUMULUS!
I CAN'T! NOT MARY LOUISE!
LOOK OUT! SHE'S GOT A BLAST--UNNH!
SARGON!
DAMN YOU, SARGON, YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO DIE SECOND! THE KILLER OF MY CHILD WAS FIRST--

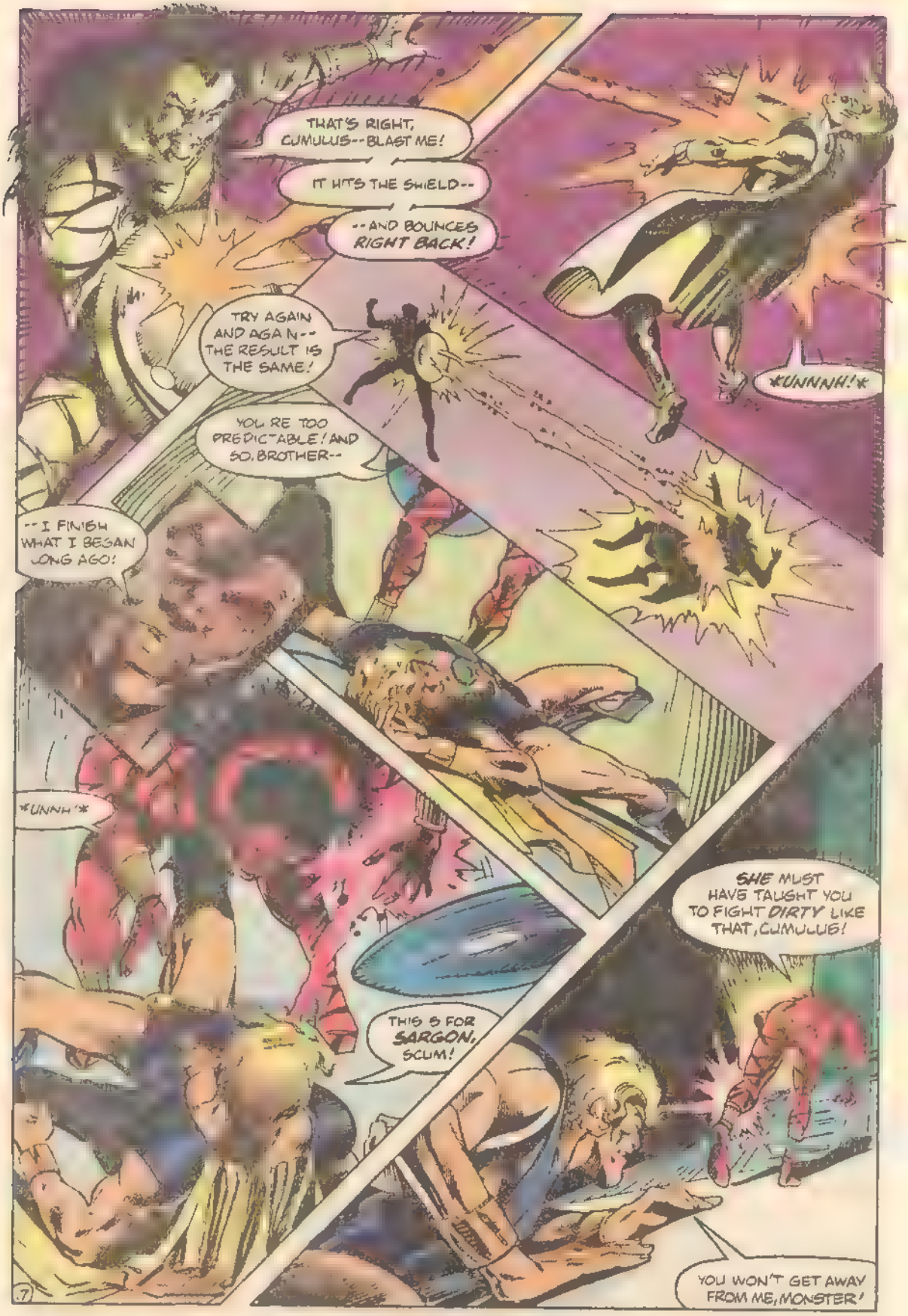
BUT THEN I'M NOTHING IF NOT--FLEXIBLE.
YOU MANIAC!!
YOUR TURN, LORD CUMULUS!
IT'S OK, SARGON. I'LL GET YOU BACK TO FEN-RA--YOU WON'T DIE--
THERE'S NO--TIME FOR THAT--MY LORD. YOU MUST DO EXACTLY AS I SAY--
LISTEN CAREFULLY--YOU MUST ACCUMULATE A FULL CHARGE OF ENERGY, AND TRANSFER IT INTO ME--AIM THE DISCHARGE AT MY FOREHEAD--HURRY--
THIS SOUNDS HORRIBLY LIKE A SOLDIER'S CLEAN DEATH, BUT--OK, SARGON, I'LL DO IT
HERE GOES--
GOD--IT'S NOT WORKING! SHE'S FADING AWAY--DISINTEGRATING!
SARGON--!


CHAOS, YOU SON OF A BITCH! SARGON'S DEATH WILL BE AVENGED! THUS SWEARS LORD CUMULUS!
AND ELSEWHERE, DEEP IN THE DARKNESS, A WOUNDED FIGURE DRAGS HERSELF BACK TO FORTRESS ROTTWANG, CITADEL OF PRINCE CHAOS!
HE'S A MONSTER, MY PRINCE! HE KILLED YGGTHION! HE SHRUGGED OFF THE RADIANT DEATH AS IF IT WERE A LIGHT-RAY!
THERE'S NOTHING LIKE HIM IN THE ENTIRE COSMOS!
YOU HAVE NEVER SEEN THE ENTIRE COSMOS, MY DEAR, NOR, I'M AFRAID, ARE YOU LIKELY TO.
YOU NOT ONLY FAIL ME, VALARIA, BUT NOW YOU MAKE THEOLOGICALLY DANGEROUS STATEMENTS AS WELL.
YET CHAOS IS A GENTLE GOD. YOU ARE MERELY BANISHED FROM MY SIGHT FOREVER.
SYMAX, EXPEL THE WRETCH. HER PITIABLENESS GIVES ME A HEADACHE.

MY PRINCE, YOU LOVED ME ONCE--AND I STILL LOVE YOU. PLEASE--
DON'T TRY THE MASTER'S GENEROSITY WITH TEARS, VALARIA. YOU KNOW THE BACK DOOR: USE IT.
SO BE IT. NEVER SHALL I GROVEL AGAIN BEFORE YOU. THE CURSE OF KUTHALU BE UPON YOU, PRINCE OF MADNESS--YOU WILL WISH YOU HAD DIED BEFORE NEXT YOU SEE ME!
SHE'S GONE, MASTER--BUT WILL SHE GO OVER TO LUGULBANDA?
SHE CAN'T TELL THAT FLOATING DODO ANYTHING HE DOESN'T ALREADY SUSPEC--EH?
AN ATTACK, MASTER! BUT WHO--?
I'M LOOKING FOR CHAOS!

THEN LOOK UPON ME, AND TREMBLE! FOR I AM CHAOS!
CHAOS, PRINCE OF MADNESS, RAVAGER OF GALAXIES!
BEHOLD POWER-- AND DESPAIR!
I'M.. NOT... IMPRESSED, MURDERER!
MY YOU'RE A STERN CRITIC, DEAR BROTHER!
FOR WE ARE BROTHERS, CUMULUS! DID LUGULBANDA NOT TELL YOU? DISTASTEFUL BUT TRUE...
BUT CHAOS IS NOT SECRETIVE. STAY YOUR HAND A MOMENT AND I'LL TELL YOU ALL!
THINK BACK, CUMULUS-- BACK TO EARTH--AND THE INSANE ASYLUM!*
YES-- THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT YOU...
I KNOW YOUR MIND INSIDE OUT, CUMULUS BECAUSE I TURNED IT INSIDE OUT! I USED YOUR POWER TO AUGMENT MINE!
SOMETHING? I WAS THE CENTER OF IT! THE RINGMASTER AT YOUR CIRCUS OF PSYCHOSES!
YOU'RE A CRIPPLED, BORDERLINE LOONEY BECAUSE OF ME, AND NO THREAT TO MY PLANS!
*LAST ISSUE!

I'VE HEARD ENOUGH!
KILLING YOU WOULD BE A FAVOR TO THE UNIVERSE!
SYMAX! DESTROY HIM!
I HEAR AND OBEY, MASTER!
DIE, CUMULUS!
EVEN NOW, MY MACHINES ARE BLEEDING THE STARS--DARKENING ENTIRE GALAXIES TO GIVE ME THE POWER TO CAPTURE THE CRYSTAL!
THE CRYSTAL, CUMULUS! YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHAT THAT MEANS!
YOU'VE HAD THIS COMING, APE!
THANK YOU FOR THE DIVERSION, SYMAX!
AND NOW-- LET'S CONTINUE OUR-- DEBATE!


THAT'S RIGHT, CUMULUS--BLAST ME!
IT HITS THE SHIELD--
--AND BOUNCES RIGHT BACK!
TRY AGAIN AND AGA N--THE RESULT IS THE SAME!
UNNNH!
YOU RE TOO PREDICTABLE! AND SO, BROTHER--
--I FINISH WHAT I BEGAN LONG AGO!
UNNH
SHE MUST HAVE TAUGHT YOU TO FIGHT DIRTY LIKE THAT, CUMULUS!
THIS IS FOR SARGON, SCUM!
YOU WON'T GET AWAY FROM ME, MONSTER!

NO ONE PROFANES THE PERSON OF PRINCE CHAOS! NO ONE CAUSES H.M PAIN!
ALLOW ME TO ILLUSTRATE!
CLICK-S
FEEL IT, CUMULUS? THE HEAT OF A THOUSAND SUNS??
FEEL YOUR VERY FLESH MELT, BROTHER!
DIE, LORD CUMULUS --DIE!
NEXT ISSUE: CHAOS TRIUMPHANT! (NO REALLY, WE MEAN IT!)

warped words

Last month, I promised you the secret origins of the multitude of talents behind **Warp.** Well, I'm not one to go back on a promise – particularly when I'd be stuck for a letter column if I did!

First, the two men without whom there would be no **Warp,** in any form. When the first play opened in 1971, the two authors, who already had been laboring over the concept and script for several years, had no idea all of that would come to all of this.

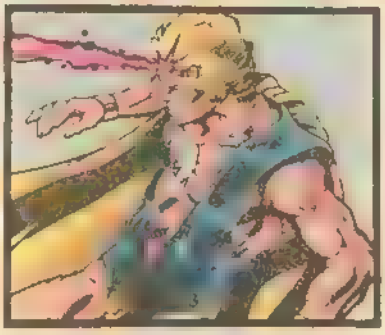
Stuart Gordon, it reads on the *Warp* play script, conceived the story and co-plotted the finished product. He also directed all three Chicago incarnations, as well as the New York run. A founder of the Organic Theater Company and a co-writer of many of its productions, Stuart has rightfully won nearly every appropriate award in the book, including an Emmy for the PBS television production of *Bleacher Bums* (soon to be a major motion picture). He has taken his Organic Theater just about all over the world; their most recent hit (at the time of this writing), *E/R,* has been playing to packed houses for the better part of a year. Stuart also guest-directed the satirical tribute to himself at the *Second City.*

Bury St. Edmund co-plotted the plays and wrote the final script. Bury – who writes under what I believe to be his own name as well as the Bury St. Edmund nom de guerre – has seen his words appear in such places as *Playboy, Oui, the Chicago Tribune* and *Galaxy;* his theater reviews appear regularly in the Chicago *Reader.*

Bringing the plays to the comic book page has been a long and sometimes exhausting process. Thoughts and efforts to that effect had been taking place ever since the play opened. Back in the early 1970s, the rumors centered on some sort of underground comics adaptation. When Neal Adams became art director for the play, of course, the rumors flew once again. But it wasn't until last month that the event took place, and we've assembled some of the finest talents around to pull it off.

Frank Brunner came out of something strongly resembling four-color retirement to adapt and pencil **Warp.** Best known for his work on Marvel Comics' *Doctor Strange* and *Howard the Duck,* Frank, a native Brooklynite who expatriated to California some time ago, has worked on numerous other Marvel characters. Some of Frank's work on *Doctor Strange* presently is being reprinted in a higher-quality format.

Mr. Brunner has become a regular in the portfolio world, and is rather closely associated with Michael Moorcock's classic sword and sorcery character, Elric –



Frank did an Elric story for *Heavy Metal,* did a portfolio on the character and illustrated the *Stormbringer* board game. Frank also worked on the *Doctor Strange* television movie.

Peter Gillis is dialoging Frank's adaptation. Marvel's top utility writer, Peter has scripted just about every character in the house. His most recent (and yet-to-be-published) efforts over there include writing the *Eternals* mini series – which might wind up as a *Thor* saga – and next year's *Captain America* annual, which ties up the loose ends from Peter's *Super-Villain Team-Up* multi-year epic. A free-lance writer in sundry fields, Peter is slowly winding up his doctorate at the University of Chicago.

Bob Smith has inked just about as many characters over at DC as Peter has written over at Marvel. Some of his best-known work has appeared on *Batman, The Warlord* and – most recently – *Night Force;* Bob's inks also complemented Joe Staton's pencils on *Plastic Man.*

Janice Cohen is our **Warp** colorist. Janice began her career in 1973 as a production artist for Marvel Comics, soon graduating to a position as staff colorist. During her tenure, Janice had the assignment of coloring the covers for all of Marvel's major titles. Janice also will be coloring Mike Grell's **Jon Sable Freelance** and **Starslayer** for **First,** both scheduled for early 1983 release.

Bruce Patterson letters **Warp.** In his spare time, he colors and letters **E-Man,** acts as **First Comics'** production coordinator (that was his drawing of Sargon in last month's house ad), and tries to finish up inking Brian Bolland's fine work on DC's *Camelot 3000* mini-series. A newlywed, Bruce in his off-hours tries to find time to sleep.

This issue marks the beginning of a three-part series based upon the Faceless Ones characters. And seeing as how we're doing the bio-rag . .

Jack C. Harris is writing the series; Jack is a former editor over at DC Comics and, at one time or another, has written *Wonder Woman, Kamandi, Moon Knight* (for Marvel), *Supergirl,* the *Legion of Super-Heroes* and a host of others. Jack's got a series going in *Heavy Metal* these days and is doing *The Fly* for Archie's recurrent super-hero line.

Steve Ditko is drawing the series, and anybody who isn't familiar with his work has no right to call him or herself a comics fan. Steve created or co-created much of the 1960's comics world: *Spider-Man, Doctor Strange, The Question, The Creeper* and many others. Steve's work was instrumental on the *Hulk* revival (yes, the first time around, The Hulk was cancelled!) on *Iron Man,* and on many of the much-respected *T.H.U.N.D.E.R. Agents* characters. His *Mr. A* rightfully is regarded as the paragon of comics self-expression.

Steve is drawing The Faceless Ones series "twice-up," or one-third again larger than regular original art size.

Needless to say, we're real excited about The Faceless Ones series, and if it is well-received, we'll bring it back for another round.

All of which brings to mind another point. Now that I've done my mandatory "Who We Are" column (last month) and my mandatory "Who's Who" column, I'm done vamping. Unfortunately, my next letter column is due in Associate Editor Rick Oliver's strict-yet-grubby hands about two weeks before **Warp #1** hits the stores. So what we'll be doing is this: we're going to send out photocopies of **Warp #1** to a number of people selected at random from the letter pages of other people's comic books. Hopefully, they'll send us letters – thumbs up and/or thumbs down – and we'll have something to print in the space next issue.

Although I have to admit, the concept of a "Chaos, Prince of Madness Puzzle Page" is growing on me.

Here's the bit. If you write to us, maybe we'll publish your letter. We'll certainly read it, and take your comments to heart. But if we do read it, you just might be one of the lucky ones to receive an advance look at one of our next titles – maybe the aforementioned **Jon Sable Freelance.** And we will send you a free copy of the issue in which your letter appears.

Our address: Warped Words, c/o First Comics, Inc. 1014 Davis Street, Evanston, Illinois 60201.

Next month: Now that we've had our little Warp family reunion, we'll see what happens when Valeria tries to get her vengeance. We'll discover just what Lord Cumulus is willing to give up to go home. And we'll learn the fate of Paragwen and the Masque.

And we're just getting into it.

– Mike Gold

FACELESS ONES
DEEP WITHIN THE EXTRA-DIMENSIONAL REALM IN WHICH EXISTS FEN-RA--LEGENDARY DWELLING PLACE OF THE ALL MIGHTY MASTER OF THE MYSTICAL, LUGLIBANDA--CONFLICT RAGES AS A PAIR OF UNFALTERING YOUTHS BATTLE AGAINST OVERWHELMING ODDS
AND THOUGH A SEEMINGLY UNIMPORTANT CONFRONTATION AMID THE ENDLESS DIMENSIONAL REALITIES, IT NONETHELESS ATTRACTS LUGLIBANDA'S SPIRITUAL INTEREST...
FIGHT, FARR--THESE WINGED ONES ARE ALL THAT STAND BETWEEN US AND... THE MASQUE OF MOTTAGAMMA!
FEAR NOT, FAIR PARAGWEN--'TIS [illegible] AGAIN [illegible] AND WITH I AS ONE OF THE TWO, OUR [illegible] ADVANTAGE!
PART 1
THE PEOPLE OF PARAGWEN
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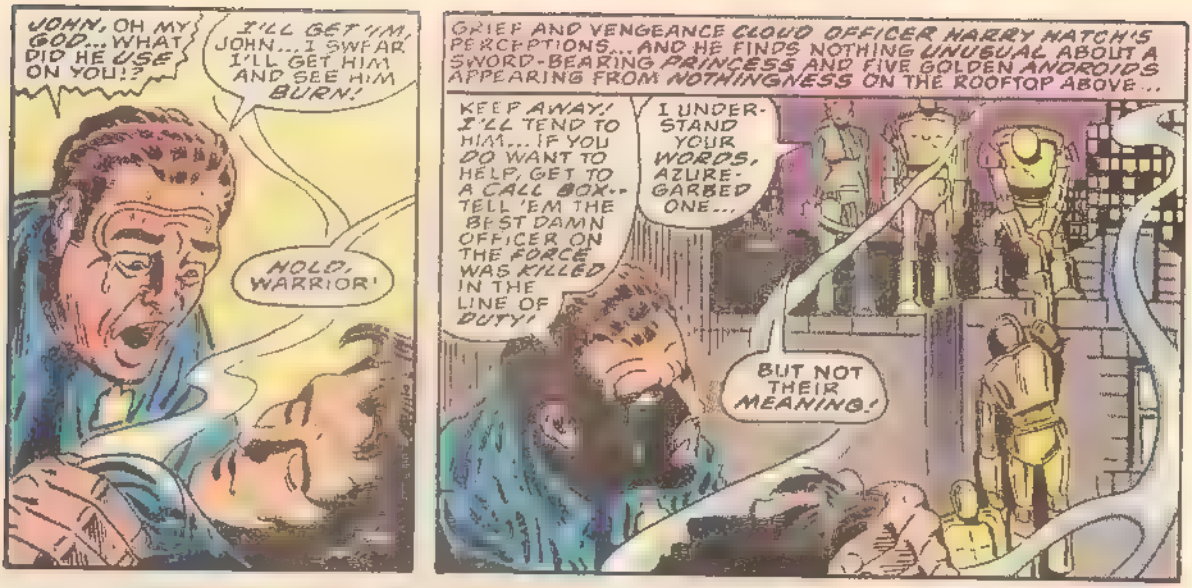
BASED ON CHARACTERS FROM THE PLAY WARP CREATED BY STUART GORDON AND BURY ST. EDMUND

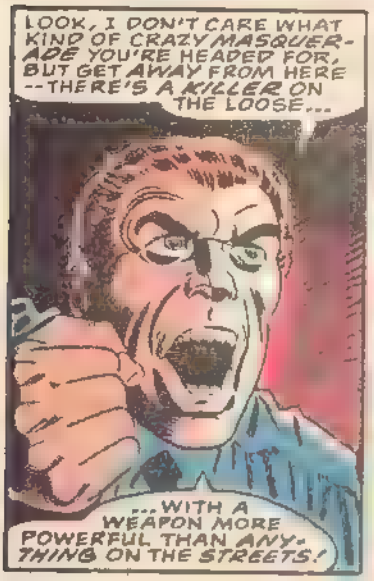
CEASE YOUR BOASTING AND DEFEND YOURSELF! WITHOUT THE MASQUE, WE'VE NO HOPE OF SAVING OUR PEOPLE!
ITS MAGIC CAN FREE US FOREVER FROM THE IRON RULE OF THE USUR[redacted] TYBALD!
MAGIC! WHO NEEDS MAGIC? WE SHOULD BE FIGHTING TYBALD FACE-TO-FACE INSTEAD OF THESE LEATHER-WINGED GUARDIANS!
PERHAPS FARR IS AS RIGHT AS HE IS BRAVE AND FOOLISH! BUT FIGHTING AGAINST TYBALD AND HIS FOLLOWERS HAS BEEN USELESS SO FAR--!
THE MASQUE AND ITS POWER COULD BE OUR LAST CHANCE!
BACK, WINGED DEMON-- FEEL THE MIGHT OF THE STAR HOOK!
YOUR WIELDING OF THAT BLADE MAY MAKE ME BELIEVE IT IS INDEED ENCHANTED!
BUT MY CLUB OF OAKEN WOOD DISPATCHES DEMONS JUST AS WELL!
STAR HOOK IS MAGICAL; BUT WE NEED NOT ITS POWER--YET!
MAGIC OR NO, WE ARE WINNING THIS BATTLE...
AND SOON WE SHALL BE CLOSE ENOUGH TO SNATCH THE MYSTICAL MASQUE FROM THESE FOUL CREATURES' GRASP!
FARR! THEY'VE CIRCLED 'ROUND-- THEY REGROUP BEHIND US!
THEN NOW'S OUR OPPORTUNITY! NOTHING STANDS 'TWIXT US AND THE MASQUE!
NO! 'TIS SOME TRICK! THEY ARE SWORN NEVER TO LEAVE THE MASQUE UNPROTECTED!

TRICK, INDEED. IF MERGING INTO A FORM OF PURE ENERGY CAN BE TERMED A TRICK...
SUCH IS THE CURSE OF THE WINGED ONES... THAT THEY MUST FOREVER GUARD THE AWESOME MASQUE OF MORTAGAMMA..
EVEN UNTO DEATH-- OR THE SEMBLANCE OF DEATH...
THE CRACKLING FORCE THAT WAS THE WINGED ONE'S MOVES BLOCKS THE CHAMPION FARR'S PATH.
WE'VE DESTROYED THEM, PRINCESS.. THE MASQUE IS OURS!
FARR! NO! BY HE WHO DREAMS!
YAHHH--
NO.. NO! BY LUGULBANDA'S CRYSTAL! NO!
BUT.. BUT IN... DEATH MY LOVER HAS TRIUMPHED! THE MASQUE IS UNGUARDED
FOR THE FIRST TIME IN INFINITY!
STILL TREMBLING OVER THE DEATH OF HER CHAMPION AND LOVER, PRINCESS PARAGWEN'S FINGERS REACH FOR THE PRIZE
BUT AS SHE PIERCES THE SWIRLING BLACKNESS AROUND THE MASQUE...
GODS! IT'S SLIPPED FROM MY GRASP LIKE A THING ALIVE!
IT--IT FADES AWAY... AS IF FALLING THROUGH A HOLE WITHIN THE VERY AIR! NO! NO!!
BY THE NAMELESS GODS, THE QUEST HAS FAILED! WHAT CAN STAND 'GAINST THE TYRANT TYBALD NOW?
AND FARR...
..FARR! YOU DID DIE IN VAIN! I HAVE FAILED MYSELF, MY FATHER AND YOU! BY THE NAME OF WHATEVER GODS THERE ARE
TAKE ME!!
IF A PRINCESS BORN CANNOT SUCCEED IN SUCH A QUEST, THEN DEATH IS ALL THAT I--!?!
.. GODS. .

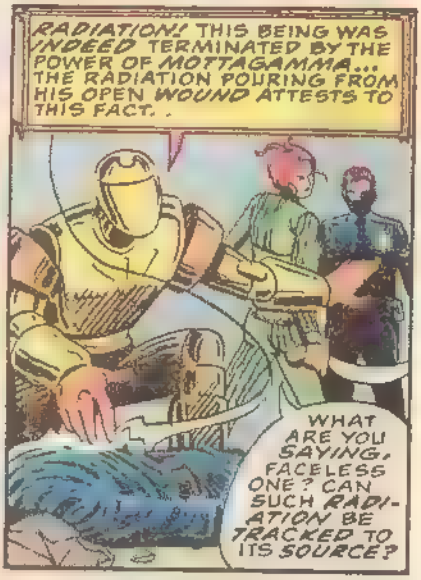
WHO...WHO ARE YOU, ROBED ONE... AND HOW DO I COME TO THIS PLACE OF SWIRLING SHAPES AND LIGHTS? THE PRINCESS PARAGWEN DEMANDS TO--
CALM YOURSELF, PRINCESS ...AND MAKE NO DEMANDS OF ME, FOR I AM LUGULBANDA, AND I AM KNOWLEDGE!
LUGULBANDA! FOR AS LONG AS SHE REMEMBERS, THE LEGENDS OF PARAGWEN'S PEOPLE HAVE WHISPERED HIS NAME AND HIS HOME OF FEN-RA... SO SHE DROPS TO SILENCE AND LISTENS...
I HAVE OBSERVED YOUR QUEST AND ITS SEEMING FAILURE...
YOU NEED NOT KNOW THE WHY FOR THE TIME BEING, BUT I AM CONCERNED THAT YOU EVENTUALLY SUCCEED IN OBTAINING THE MASQUE OF MOTTAGAMMA... AND IN OVERTHROWING THAT RECKLESS SNIT TYBALD...
I AM OFFERING, PRINCESS, TO HELP YOU...
IF..IF YOU ARE WHO YOU SAY YOU ARE, THEN YOUR LEGENDARY POWER CAN RETRIEVE THE MASQUE FOR ME!
PERHAPS... BUT THIS IS YOUR QUEST AND YOU MUST COMPLETE WHAT YOU BEGAN...
THEN YOU...YOU CAN GUIDE ME...OR TRANSPORT ME TO WHERE THE MASQUE NOW LIES? PLEASE DO SO QUICKLY, BEFORE TYBALD DISCOVERS ME GONE AND SEEKS MY CAPTURE!
PRINCESS! I SHALL COMPLY WITH YOUR WISHES, BUT THE EXACT TERMS OF MY COMPLIANCE SHALL BE MINE!
BEHOLD! USING RESIDUAL ENERGY THAT CLINGS TO YOU AFTER YOUR BATTLE WITH THE WINGED ONES...
I ACTIVATE MY SERVANTS-- THE FACELESS ONES!
YOU SHALL NEED THEIR AID, PRINCESS, FOR THEY SEE, HEAR AND SPEAK DIFFERENTLY THAN YOU OR I! FOR YOU SEE, IN THE ALTERNATE REALM WHEREIN THE MASQUE NOW EXISTS...
...IT SHALL APPEAR AS A DIFFERENT OBJECT ALTOGETHER! THE FACELESS ONES WILL RECOGNIZE IT NO MATTER WHAT ITS CONFIGURATION!
THE--THE SWIRLING BLACKNESS APPEARS... IT WAS THROUGH THIS THE MASQUE VANISHED!
I GO, LUGULBANDA --AND I THANK YOU! FORGIVE MY ILL MANNERS!
FORGIVEN, CHILD! BUT HASTEN... YOU SHALL BE TRAVELING THROUGH ALTERNATE REALITIES AND DIMENSIONS! THE WAY IS DANGEROUS AND DIFFICULT...
...AND THE LONGER YOU DWELL WITHIN THE PARALLEL WORLDS, THE MORE HAZARDOUS YOUR RETURN! HASTEN... AND FARE YOU WELL!
SUPERB! ALL IS GOING QUITE PRECISELY TO PLAN! AH, WELL...NOW TO ATTEND MATTERS OF MORE IMPORT!

ANOTHER REALM...BUT ONE PERHAPS A BIT MORE FAMILIAR! THE SURROUNDING CITY IS CALLED NEW YORK.
YOU'RE CORNERED AND HELPLESS, NORBY... GIVE IT UP!
HOW COULD I HAVE BEEN SO DAMN CLUMSY! HOW!? I'M THE EAST COAST'S TOP HIT MAN-- I GOT A REP!
I'M A PROFESSIONAL--BUT WHEN THESE TWO BUMBLING COPS STUMBLED ONTO ME AND MY TARGET, I DROPPED MY MAGNUM! DAMN, I'LL NEVER GET ANOTHER CONTRACT IN THIS BURG!
WE KNOW YOU'RE NOT ARMED, NORBY...WE'RE NOT DRAWING OUR GUNS! GIVE UP!
HE...HE'S HEADED UP THAT ALLEY, DADE... HE'LL GET AWAY!
HATCH, OLD BUDDY...YOU'VE GOT TO LEARN YOUR BEAT!
THAT ALLEY'S A DEAD END!
END OF THE LINE, NORBY... YOU'RE NOT GOING ANY-WHERE UNLESS YOU'VE LEARNED HOW TO FADE THROUGH WALLS!
DAMN COPS! YOU WOULDN'T TALK SO CUTESY IF I STILL HAD MY MAGNUM!
SUDDENLY, THIS ROUTINE ARREST ATTEMPT BECOMES... EXTRAORDINARY--!
EH--!? WHAT'S THIS SWIRLING BLACK STUFF? SOME KINDA COP TRICK!?
NONE OF OUR DOING, NORBY...BUT DON'T TOUCH IT, UNTIL...
FASTER, FASTER, THE BLACKNESS SPINS BETWEEN THE TWO LAWMEN AND THE KILLER.. WHEN SUDDENLY, AS IF IN UNHOLY ANSWER TO NORBY'S UNSPOKEN NEED...
WHAT THE DEVIL!? SOME KIND OF FREAKY GUN DROPPED OUTTA NOWHERE!
YER RIGHT, BLUEBOY... IT SURE LOOKS LIKE MY KINDA PLAYTHING--!
AND SEEIN' AS HOW YOU TWO FLATFOOTS ARE TOO SCARED TO MOVE-- I'LL JUST HELP MY-SELF!
DADE! LOOK OUT! HE'S GONNA FIRE THAT THING RIGHT AT-- NOOOOO!!
IT'S TOO WEIRD! IT CAN'T BE A REAL G-- AHHAARRH!
HOLY JUMPIN' MOSES! IT TOOK OUT THAT COP'S INSIDES AND KEPT ON GOIN' THROUGH THE WALL!
YOU SON OF A BITCH! YOU BLEW HIM AWAY IN COLD BLOOD! HIS GUN WAS HOLSTERED!!
STUPID! A DEAD, STUPID COP! DON'T FOLLOW OR YOU'LL JOIN HIM!!

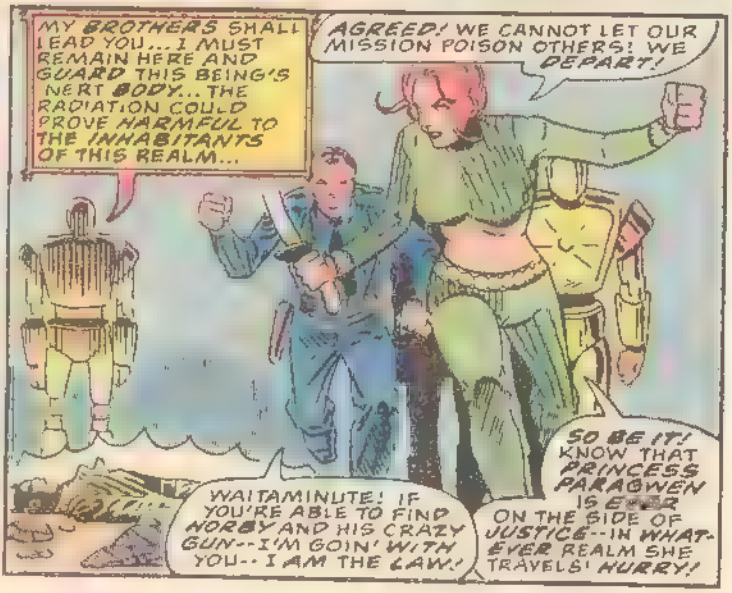

JOHN, OH MY GOD... WHAT DID HE USE ON YOU!?
I'LL GET 'IM, JOHN... I SWEAR I'LL GET HIM AND SEE HIM BURN!
HOLD, WARRIOR!
GRIEF AND VENGEANCE CLOUD OFFICER HARRY HATCH'S PERCEPTIONS... AND HE FINDS NOTHING UNUSUAL ABOUT A SWORD-BEARING PRINCESS AND FIVE GOLDEN ANDROIDS APPEARING FROM NOTHINGNESS ON THE ROOFTOP ABOVE...
KEEP AWAY! I'LL TEND TO HIM... IF YOU DO WANT TO HELP, GET TO A CALL BOX-- TELL 'EM THE BEST DAMN OFFICER ON THE FORCE WAS KILLED IN THE LINE OF DUTY!
I UNDERSTAND YOUR WORDS, AZURE-GARBED ONE...
BUT NOT THEIR MEANING!


LOOK, I DON'T CARE WHAT KIND OF CRAZY MASQUERADE YOU'RE HEADED FOR, BUT GET AWAY FROM HERE --THERE'S A KILLER ON THE LOOSE...
...WITH A WEAPON MORE POWERFUL THAN ANYTHING ON THE STREETS!

THE MASQUE! WAS YOUR BROTHER WARRIOR SLAIN BY THE MASQUE OF MOTTAGAMMA WHICH I HAVE CROSSED THE INFINITE TO OBTAIN!? ANSWER!

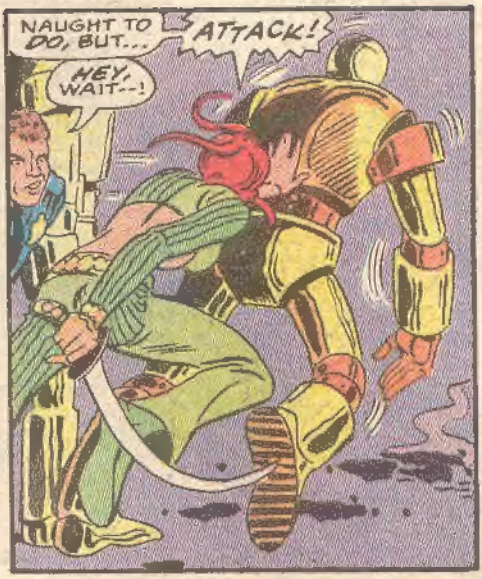

RADIATION! THIS BEING WAS INDEED TERMINATED BY THE POWER OF MOTTAGAMMA... THE RADIATION POURING FROM HIS OPEN WOUND ATTESTS TO THIS FACT..
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING, FACELESS ONE? CAN SUCH RADIATION BE TRACKED TO ITS SOURCE?

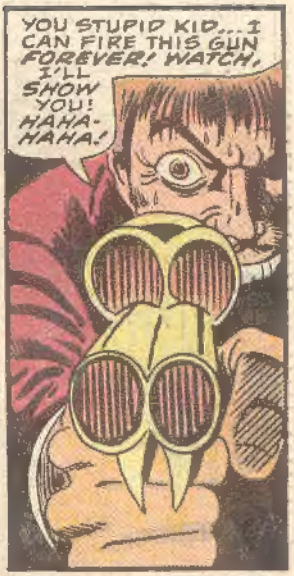
IF YOU ARE ABLE TO ASCERTAIN THE MASQUE'S LOCATION, DO SO QUICKLY... LUGULBANDA SAID WE HAVE LITTLE TIME...
AFFIRMATIVE THE MASQUE LEAVES A CLEAR PATH TO FOLLOW


MY BROTHERS SHALL LEAD YOU... I MUST REMAIN HERE AND GUARD THIS BEING'S INERT BODY... THE RADIATION COULD PROVE HARMFUL TO THE INHABITANTS OF THIS REALM...
AGREED! WE CANNOT LET OUR MISSION POISON OTHERS! WE DEPART!
WAITAMINUTE! IF YOU'RE ABLE TO FIND NORBY AND HIS CRAZY GUN--I'M GOIN' WITH YOU-- I AM THE LAW!
SO BE IT! KNOW THAT PRINCESS PARAGWEN IS EVER ON THE SIDE OF JUSTICE--IN WHATEVER REALM SHE TRAVELS! HURRY!

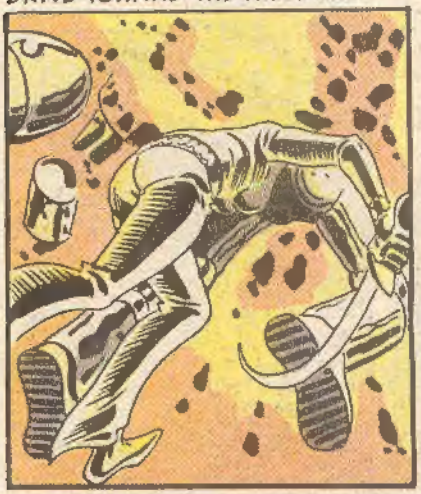
ELSEWHERE, ON EARTH...
YEAH, YOU HEARD ME... I MISSED THE HIT! BUT THE CONTRACT'S STILL ON AND IT'S STILL MINE!
BUT YOU SAID THE COPS WERE ON TO YOU...
DON'T WORRY ABOUT NO COPS--DON'T WORRY ABOUT NOTHIN'! I GOT ME THE PERFECT WAY OF MAKIN' THE HIT AND MAKIN' IT UNTRACEABLE!
THE COPS'LL THINK THE TARGET WAS BOMBED OUTTA HIS HOTEL ROOM--THEY WON'T TRACE THAT KINDA RUB-OUT TO ME--IT AIN'T MY STYLE! AND THE WEAPON I'M USIN' IS UNTRACEABLE--GUARANTEED!
WHATEVER... JUST DO IT! ÷CLIK÷
OKAY, ALL SET... THIS SCREWY GUN IS THROBBIN' WITH POWER! I'LL BLAST MY MARK TWICE AS FAR AS I SENT THAT STUPID COP!
ENSHROUDED BY THE CITY'S SHADOWS OF NIGHT, THE KILLER HURRIES TO MEET HIS RENDEZVOUS WITH DEATH...
ONLY ONE LOOSE END ON THIS CAPER... THAT OTHER COP! I SHOULDA WIPED HIM OUT, TOO...
BUT I DON'T KNOW HOW MANY SHOTS THIS GUN HAS!
IT'S A PRETTY SAFE BET THAT I'LL HAVE TO TRACK HIM DOWN AND OFF HIM AS SOON AS I TAKE CARE OF THIS DAMN POLITICIAN...
THE COP'LL PROBABLY HAVE TO BE SATISFIED WITH A CONVENTIONAL RUB-OUT... THIS GUN LOOKS AS IF IT ONLY HAS TWO BARRELS...
THE ASSASSIN SURVEYS THE ROOFTOP... AND SEES THE CLARITY OF HIS LINE OF FIRE FROM THIS LOCATION...
...STRAIGHT TO THE HOTEL WINDOW OF AN UNSUSPECTING POLITICAL CANDIDATE--!
PRINCESS! I DETECT THE MASQUE'S POWER-- ABOVE!
THANK HE WHO DREAMS!
THE WIELDER OF THE POWER STANDS READY TO UNLEASH THE FORCE ANEW!
AGAIN!? WE'VE GOT TO STOP THAT MADMAN!
YOU ARE AS BRAVE AS MY FALLEN LOVER FARR, WARRIOR... YOU FACE THE UNKNOWN UNAFRAID!
COME!

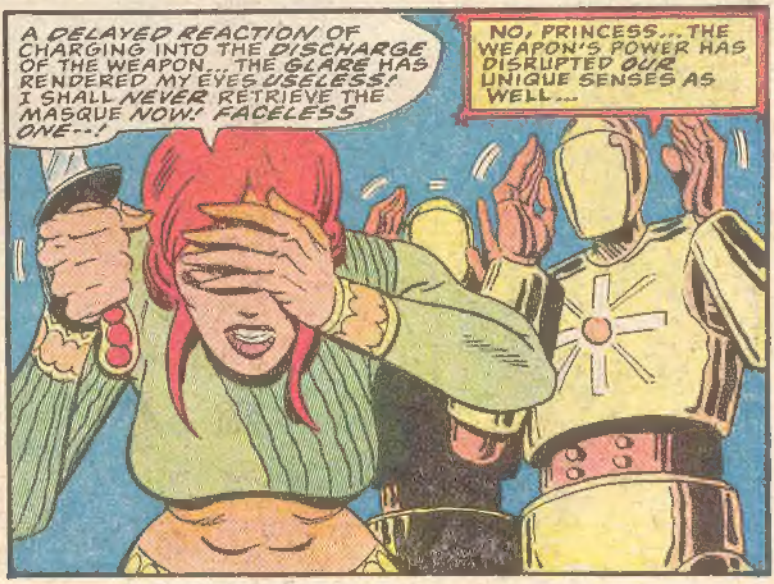
SILENTLY, THE FACELESS ONES FORM EASY ACCESS TO THE TOP OF THE ANCIENT, DIRTY BUILDING...
THERE IS ONLY A SINGLE INDIVIDUAL HERE... AND FROM WHAT YOU HAVE TOLD ME, WARRIOR... HE WILL NOT HESITATE TO KILL THOSE WHO CONFRONT HIM...
I'LL THINK ABOUT JUST WHO THESE GUYS IN THE METAL SUITS ARE--AND WHO THIS CRAZY KID WITH THE SWORD IS AFTER I CATCH UP WITH NORBY... UNLESS I'M DEAD TOO AND THIS IS ALL SOME KINDA CRAZY AFTER-LIFE DREAM!
STAND RIGHT THERE, COP KILLER! YOUR MINUTES ARE NUMBERED!
WHA--!? THE OTHER COP!!
C'MON, NORBY... PUT UP A FIGHT... I'D LOVE IT IF YOU'D PUT UP A FIGHT...
YOU'RE DEAD, COP!!
FACELESS ONE! PROTECT!!
ACKNOWLEDGED... BUT THE MASQUE WEAPON IS POWERFUL!
DAMN! THAT METAL GUY JUMPED IN FASTER THAN I COULD SEE--
--AND I WASTED MY LAST SHOT ON 'IM!
HO-LY! THIS... THIS ISN'T A GUY IN A SUIT-- THERE'S NOBODY INSIDE!!
THE EVIL ONE HAS FIRED MORE THAN TWO SHOTS FROM THE MASQUE!
YEAH... THAT GLOW AROUND THE CRAZY THING SEEMS TO BE RE-CHARGING IT SOMEHOW...





THE BLINDING POWER OF THE WEAPON TEARS INTO THE MAGICAL METAL OF THE FACELESS ONE ON ITS FORWARD DRIVE TOWARD THE KILLER...





YOU'RE AN AMAZING YOUNG WOMAN...I'LL HELP YOU ALL I CAN, BUT I DIDN'T SEE WHERE THE GUN...AND THE HAND FELL...
THEN WE SHALL HAVE TO WASTE VALUABLE TIME WAITING FOR MY VISION TO CLEAR! I MUST...
PRINCESS! SOMETHING...
I...I PERCEIVE...I CAN SEE, PRINCESS... I CAN SEE AS I HAVE NEVER SEEN BEFORE!
WARRIOR! PLEASE TELL ME WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO MY FACELESS ONE!
YOU MIGHT HAVE TO CHANGE HIS NAME...YOUR METAL BUDDY SEEMS TO HAVE GROWN A PAIR OF VERY HUMAN-LOOKING EYEBALLS!
COME! I AM NOW ABLE TO FIND THE WEAPON-MASQUE!
PRESENTLY, IN THE STREET BELOW...
THERE! IF THIS NEW SENSE IS OPERATING PROPERLY, I "SEE" THE GUN AND HAND BEFORE US NOW!
AND NOW I HAVE GUIDED US BACK TO WHERE WE FIRST ENTERED THIS STRANGE REALM...MY BROTHER STILL STANDS GUARD OVER THE SLAIN BLUE WARRIOR.
MY...MY EYES! THEY'RE CLEARING! I CAN SEE AGAIN!
BEHOLD! THE RADIATION HAS LEFT THE BODY OF THE FALLEN ONE...AND IT HAS RE-OPENED THE SWIRLING BLACKNESS! WE CAN RETURN HOME WITH OUR PRIZE!
AND, AS BEST SHE CAN, SHE EXPLAINS ALL TO THE DUMB-FOUNDED AND DISBELIEVING OFFICER HATCH... BUT THEN...
NO! THE WARP DRAWS IN THE MASQUE! WE ARE LOSING IT!!
ONWARD, MY FACELESS ONES! TO WHATEVER REALM THE MASQUE NOW GOES... PARAGWEN WILL FOLLOW! FAREWELL, BLUE WARRIOR... WE SHALL NOT MEET AGAIN, BUT I SHALL NEVER FORGET YOUR BRAVERY--!
FAREWELL TO YOU... AND GOD-SPEED...
WILL PARAGWEN AND THE FACELESS ONES FIND THE MASQUE OF MOTTAGAMMA IN TIME?
WHAT IS THE TERRIBLE POWER OF TYBALD?
HOW DID THE FACELESS ONE OBTAIN HIS EYES?
ANSWERS--AND MORE QUESTIONS--NEXT MONTH!